

VZCZCXYZ0001  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKV #0054/01 0131712  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 131712Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY KYIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7016  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KYIV 000054

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UP](#)  
SUBJECT: RADA COALITION: AS STABLE AS IT WANTS TO BE

REF: 08 KYIV 2486

Classified By: Ambassador William Taylor for reasons 1.4(b,d)

SUMMARY

-----  
11. (C) As the Rada winds down its session with a final plenary week that started on January 13, the coalition appears to be stable, with PM Tymoshenko in control. Rada Speaker Lytvyn may harbor presidential ambitions, but he is unlikely to scuttle the coalition in pursuit of the presidency. Pro-coalition Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defense (OU-PSD) MPs have little choice but to stay with Tymoshenko's bloc (BYuT), having left President Yushchenko's camp. Coalition opponents have thus far not mounted a serious challenge to its validity (Ref A). Rada contacts say that the coalition will likely last as long as it is useful to Tymoshenko -- potentially through the upcoming presidential election season. A Regions call for a vote of no-confidence in Tymoshenko's government in response to the gas crisis is yet another political gambit in the run-up to presidential elections, and is unlikely to gather significant support. End Summary.

Tymoshenko "Controls Coalition Destiny"

-----  
12. (C) Rada contacts in and out of the coalition told us that the current coalition of BYuT, Lytvyn bloc and a majority of OU-PSD MPs is likely to remain stable for as long as Tymoshenko deems the coalition necessary. Pro-coalition OU-PSD MP Volodymyr Arieiev considered Tymoshenko the "strongest politician in Ukraine" -- she controls the destiny of the coalition. BYuT MP Valeriy Pysarenko told us that BYuT will likely keep the coalition together in its current format through the presidential election. Pysarenko posited that early Rada elections would likely be unnecessary, as after the presidential elections, the coalition would likely gather support from other MPs looking to gain favor with a newly-elected Tymoshenko.

13. (C) Political Analyst Ihor Kohut said that the coalition is neither strong nor weak, but its existence suits most parties for now because it allows the Rada to work. He told us that, although the coalition represents a minority of MPs in the Rada, Tymoshenko can look to either the rump OU-PSD MPs or the Communists for additional votes which gives the coalition options. Echoing Pysarenko, Kohut predicted that the coalition would survive until at least 2010. Regions MP Nestor Shufrych told us that his party would continue to speak out against the coalition because they are in opposition, but that they recognize that the coalition exists and it is not going anywhere anytime soon. He admitted that, despite its public rhetoric, the majority of Regions MPs was not interested in early Rada elections.

Lytvyn Likely to Toe the Line

¶4. (C) One potential stumbling block to coalition stability is Rada Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn's aspirations for higher office. Rada contacts tell us that he will likely make a run at the presidency -- all party heads would -- but he would not do so at the expense of his Speaker's seat by pulling out of the coalition. BYuT contacts told us that they expect Lytvyn to run for president, but they do not consider him a serious contender. They were confident that Lytvyn would not rock the boat. MP Arieiev said Lytvyn knows he cannot win the presidency, and he wouldn't want to campaign on being the person who destroyed the coalition and lose his position as Speaker in the process. Regions MP Vladimir Makeenko concurred, saying that Lytvyn would likely run a "gentle campaign" that could set him up for further political favors in the second round of the election and beyond.

OU-PSD Majority Not Likely to Make Waves...

-----

¶5. (C) Arieiev told us that OU-PSD's pro-coalition majority is relatively solid, and would remain with BYuT for the foreseeable future. He lamented Yushchenko's "hysterical" reaction in September that resulted in OU-PSD pulling out of the coalition, and said that rational MPs in OU-PSD know that it is better to work within a coalition. He suggested that there was little that could push a majority of OU-PSD to vote to leave the coalition again. Arieiev concluded that, although the coalition agreement has a bare majority 37 OU-PSD signatures, it enjoys a "comfortable buffer" in case one or two MPs decide to quit the coalition. He pointed to the December 26 vote on the 2009 budget, which garnered 46 OU-PSD votes out of a total of 72 MPs in the faction.

...Minority Out to Sea

-----

¶6. (C) The dwindling pro-Yushchenko portion of OU-PSD remains divided between Presidential Chief of Staff Baloha's seven United Center MPs and a small band of Yushchenko loyalists that have rallied behind former faction head Vyacheslav Kyrylenko's recently-announced "For Ukraine" OU-PSD sub-group. Pro-coalition OU-PSD MPs estimated that the group has no more than 17 supporters, and joked that it should be renamed "For Yushchenko" because the group's common policy platform is blind support for their "icon president."

¶7. (C) Pro-Yushchenko MP Ksenia Lyapina told us that their group, whom she dubbed the "pro-Ukraine opposition" to the coalition, are not actively working to thwart the coalition or bring down the government. She said that her "For Ukraine" colleagues would be united with the government to resolve the gas crisis, and would not work with Regions, which she described as the "anti-Ukraine opposition."

No External Challenges to Coalition, No Serious Challenges to Government

-----

¶8. (SBU) Coalition contacts tell us that no serious challenge to the coalition, legal or otherwise, has been made, and they don't expect to see any in the near future. In response to the ongoing gas crisis, however, Regions head Viktor Yanukovych and other Regions MPs called for early Rada elections and for the Rada to initiate a vote of no-confidence in PM Tymoshenko and her government.

¶9. (C) Rada contacts, including some Regions MPs, dismissed the effort as political grandstanding. Pro-Yushchenko OU-PSD MPs told us they would line up behind the government against Regions, and Regions MPs said that even they wouldn't have unanimous support within their faction for a no-confidence vote. BYuT MPs welcomed a vote of no-confidence, certain that it would fail, and told us they would do nothing to block Regions if it made an attempt to put a no-confidence vote on the agenda before the end of the current session on January 17.

¶10. (C) BYuT MP Pysarenko said that even a successful vote of no-confidence would accomplish little beyond becoming a part of Yanukovych's presidential campaign stump speech. Tymoshenko and her government would go into acting status until the coalition forwarded a new PM candidate for nomination, an unlikely development from a coalition controlled by Tymoshenko.

Comment

-----

¶11. (C) The current BYuT-led minority coalition will likely remain intact so as long as Tymoshenko finds it politically beneficial. The lack of a unified opposition and a fractured OU-PSD faction strengthens Tymoshenko's hand in the Rada. Regions has been unable to mount serious opposition to the coalition or Tymoshenko's government. The pro-Yushchenko OU-PSD group is wary of working with Regions, and the Communists have lined up with Tymoshenko when it counts. So - for the present at least - the chances for the coalition to remain in power through the December 2009/January 2010 presidential election are good. We can expect more of the incessant jockeying for position among Tymoshenko, Yanukovych, and an increasingly-isolated Yushchenko as the presidential race heats up if the economic and gas crises do not destroy the political chances of all three.  
TAYLOR